

wish to live based on the quality of the public schools in a given neighborhood. They vote with their feet, by moving to the school district of their choice. But many parents lack the means to choose the neighborhood with the best schools, or they lack the flexibility to move to a better neighborhood because of their work.

Republicans want to help parents. We want to make school choice available for more parents, because we trust parents to make the right choice for their children. That is why we support school choice.

PUBLIC EDUCATION IS THE ENGINE OF PROGRESS

(Mr. UNDERWOOD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to take strong objection to the derisive tone about public schools, labeled "government schools," as we debate the merits of vouchers. Universal public schooling is uniquely American and is the basis for the progress of this Nation.

We forget that basic public education has sustained this country through difficult times. It was the engine of industrial development, made the 21st century the American century, and makes us the leader in the Information Age. We have forgotten the intrinsic relationship between our public schools, not someone else's government schools, and our national development.

If there are problems, and there certainly are, then let us fix them with resources and reform, and that is what we stand for on this side of the aisle. But we must remember that reform means altering to improve, not to deny resources so that improvement cannot occur.

Regardless of what has been stated, this is the bottom line on vouchers. It is an elitest idea masquerading as a public benefit which will radically restructure the very American school system that has made possible the progress we enjoy as Americans.

Are there any John Deweyes or Horace Manns left in this country?

EMPOWER PARENTS AND TEACHERS, NOT BUREAUCRATS

(Mr. ROGAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ROGAN. Mr. Speaker, we Republicans have one basic, simple belief when it comes to education. We believe in empowering parents and teachers. We do not believe in empowering Federal bureaucrats. For all the good intentions of those who believe that Washington regulators should run our public schools, no Federal program can be designed to get parents to teach children to read at night or get them to love books.

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No Federal program will ever teach children to admire virtue. No Federal program will bring us orderly classrooms. No Federal program will help when children fail to do their homework.

If children have to pass through metal detectors on their way to school and be in daily fear while trying to obtain an education, no Federal program from Washington is going to correct that situation.

More importantly, when it comes to those Members of Congress looking to Federal bureaucrats to fix our schools, I can only say that no Federal program will give them common sense. We need to empower parents and teachers, and move away from Washington trying to run our schools.

That is the only solution available to ensure our children will obtain a world-class education from world-class schools.

HOUSE SHOULD REPEAL \$50 BILLION TAX BREAK FOR TOBACCO INDUSTRY

(Mr. DOGGETT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, yesterday one body in this Congress voted to repeal the \$50 billion tax break bestowed on the tobacco industry by this Gingrich-led House. Now this House must do the same and do it immediately.

Some may view it as a mere coincidence that the No. 1 contributor in this country of corrupting soft money to the Republican Party is Philip Morris Tobacco. The No. 2 contributor of corrupting soft money in this country to the Republican Party is R.J. Reynolds Tobacco. Together they gave about \$1 million in soft money to the Republican Party in the first 6 months of this year, and in month 7 their industry received a \$50 billion tax break, a tax break buried under the title "Small Business Job Protection" in the balanced budget tax agreement.

Speaker GINGRICH, schedule votes on both the ban on soft money and the repeal of this \$50 billion tax break for the tobacco industry on the same day. Eliminating two such evils at once would not be a coincidence in this special interest Congress, it would be a miracle.

THE ART OF BEING FREE

(Mr. WELDON of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, one reason why education is such an important issue is because it is education which should play such a vital role in teaching, in the words of Alexis de Toqueville, "the art of being free."

Mr. Speaker, few Americans these days think about the art of being free,

I suspect, and few schools talk about the democracy and the American republic in terms of the art of being free. But all one has to do is look around the world and it is quite obvious that societies are free not by virtue of free elections alone; not by the virtue of a written constitution that guarantees freedom on paper only; not by virtue of a judicial system that promises justice, but is corrupted by arbitrary Government power and police misconduct.

No, Mr. Speaker, the art of being free must be taught at home, cultivated in school, and given free expression and practice. The habits of freedom are encouraged in schools through the study of the uniqueness of America, our belief in individual rights over group rights, our history of forward-looking optimism, and the shared faith in the availability of the American dream to all.

SPECIAL INTEREST CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS CORRUPT DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

(Mr. MILLER of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, we now know where Speaker GINGRICH stands on campaign finance reform. The Speaker does not think there is enough money. He says they ought to be able to give any amount they want. Let everyone go play.

Mr. Speaker, when those people gave hundreds of thousands of dollars in soft money, they were not playing. When they met in the minority whip's office to gut the Clean Water Act of this Nation, they were not playing. When they met with the leadership to gut the environmental laws of this Nation, they were not playing.

Mr. Speaker, they are not playing when they give hundreds of thousands of dollars and then try to stop food safety laws in this Nation, and they certainly were not playing late at night last month when they got a \$50 billion tax cut for the tobacco companies.

No, Mr. Speaker, these are not people who are playing. These are special interests who are corrupting this democratic process, who are corrupting this House, who are corrupting this Senate, and who are corrupting the election process in this Nation.

This is about hard ball. This is about special interests, tax preferences and gifts of public resources to campaign contributors.

SCHOOL CHOICE EMPOWERS CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES

(Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, while Democrats are busy trying to come up with new excuses